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## A DESERTED VILLAGE.

FEW people have seen a Deserted Village. In all parts of England, alas! the old-fashioned rural life of which Goldsmith and Rogers sang is fast disappearing; and it is one of the saddest of facts that the growth of the manufacturing industries is being accompanied by a decay in farming and pasturage and the gradual depopulation of many a healthy village. But although most of us know villages whose life is being sapped by the commercial cupidity of overgrown towns, yet few can say that they have seen a *deserted* village—a forlorn gathering of empty, dilapidated cottages, with, perhaps, a ruined chapel and a roofless school-house.

But there is at least one deserted village in England. It stands on the summit of the Brendon Hills, in Western Somersetshire, twelve hundred feet above the sea-level, and overlooking one of the pleasantest tracts of country in all the west. From its untrodden roadside the tourist looks in one direction across a far-reaching, fertile valley, to the coffee-and-cream-coloured waters of the Bristol Channel. Another side of the prospect is bounded by the Quantock Hills, under whose shadow Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey found a temporary home, where they welcomed De Quincey, Hazlitt, Lamb, and other literary friends. 'It is a place,' exclaimed Coleridge, 'to make one forget the necessity of treason.' Within sight, also, is wild Exmoor, and other parts of the romantic stretch of country so graphically described by Mr Blackmore in *Lorna Doone*. In the midst of these charming surroundings slumbers our Deserted Village. The story of its rise and fall is soon told—and prosaic enough it is!

From time immemorial iron ore has been obtained on the Brendon Hills. We learn from the Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society that certain remains have been discovered there which prove that mines were worked by the Romans, and probably by other

races in even earlier times. About thirty years ago a company was formed to work the Brendon mines, which were known to contain a large quantity of ore. A railway was constructed from the mines to the little seaport of Watchet, whence the mineral was shipped across the Bristol Channel to Swansea. It should be borne in mind that although the railway is but ten miles in length, the terminus at Brendon is twelve hundred feet above that at Watchet. The line is fairly level until it reaches the foot of the hills, when it climbs a tremendous gradient of one foot in four. Of course no locomotive could mount such an incline. The traction-power is supplied by a stationary engine on the summit.

Standing beside the engine-house, the spectator may obtain one of the finest views in the county. The little railroad runs, with mathematical straightness, down a ravine whose length and depth almost appal one, cut through the solid rock-foundation of a forest. Far away, at the bottom of the slope, is the little station at Coombe Row, which looks no larger than a draper's packing-case; and beyond is an immense tract of undulating woodland and heathland, bounded by an indistinct something, which we know to be the sea.

The works and buildings of the new company were very extensive, and, perched upon the highest point in the range of hills, could be seen for miles around. But the enterprise failed. The preparatory expenses had been great; the cost of railway carriage and shipment were very heavy indeed; and at the same time a heavy influx of Spanish iron set in. At any rate, the venture did not repay its promoters, and the company turned its attention to better-paying objects, leaving the newly-erected works to the mercy of the cruel blasts which sweep over this exposed spot. The hundred families of miners who had been attracted to the place speedily left it, and to-day their cottages stand in pitiful rows of dismantled masonry.

A visit to this Deserted Village is not soon

forgotten. The gaunt stone chimneys of the works, the numerous isolated sheds, the grass-grown railway terminus, and the rows of roofless cottages which line the roadside, have a peculiarly depressing aspect. The central building of the works is a ruined mass of stonework, and one can scarcely believe the testimony of the date which decorates the main shaft. It seems impossible that thirty years can have reduced a new building to such a state. One is able to believe, after seeing this, in the stories told of the devastating violence of the 'sou'wester' on these bleak hills. Of the many cottages on the higher and lower roads, about six are occupied; a few are used as stores by the cottagers; the remainder are in ruins.

At the junction of the roads, just outside the village, stands a quaint, square, plain building, over the porched entrance to which are the word 'Beulah' and the date of erection. This is the little chapel erected for the Nonconforming miners. No attempt has been made to preserve it from decay. The pedestrian may stroll in, on a bright afternoon, and find the sunlight streaming through the translucent windows and their borders of red and blue glass, making the interior grotesquely gay. The pulpit and the pews and part of the floor still remain; and not long ago many of the cards affixed to the book-rests, and inscribed with the seatholders' names, were yet to be seen.

About half a mile from this sadly-misnamed chapel is Raleigh's Cross Inn, a large rambling place, once a prosperous roadside hostelry. On a triangular green before the inn is the brown, moss-grown fragment of a pillar, resting on a half-sunken pedestal—all that remains of 'Raleigh's Cross.' The family of the celebrated Sir Walter Raleigh once owned the neighbouring estate of Nettlecombe, and it is said that the cross was erected by them, near its present position, to mark a dangerous bog. Sir Charles Trevelyan, however, has stated that the cross was the monument erected to the memory of his wife by Simon Raleigh, who fought for his country at Agincourt.

The visitor should not leave the Deserted Village until he has ridden on the Mineral Railway, along which two trains are run daily—for passenger traffic only, of course. The primitive condition and arrangements of the line will amuse him immensely. Above all, he should not miss the ride up or down the incline. When the train arrives at the foot of the hill, passengers for the summit are transferred to an uncomfortable truck, and drawn by the fixed engine to their elevated destination. The sensation during the ascent is a most peculiar one, and the passenger has to be careful lest he tumble headlong into the rear of his uncouth conveyance. But the discomfort of the ascent is thoroughly atoned for, not only by its novelty, but also by the

glorious breeze on the hill-top and the magnificent view, to say nothing of the melancholy satisfaction of having seen a really Deserted Village.

## THE BURDEN OF ISABEL.\*

### CHAPTER X.—'THE ONLY WOMAN IN THE WORLD.'

WHEN about ten o'clock that night the great front-door of the house in Rutland Gate was swung open by the attendant footman to permit Miss Raynor to pass out, it was discovered that the weather was wet. It had been a cold day for June, with the wind from the north-east, and now the wind had shifted into the south-east, bringing a little warmer air laden with fine rain. Seeing that, Mr Raynor, who had accompanied his niece to the door—her other uncle was already become sedulous in the House of Commons—wished to send her to her lodgings in a cab, which the attendant footman professed a desire to call; but Miss Raynor insisted on going home afoot.

'I prefer to walk,' said she, 'and by myself, thank you, uncle. I shall not get wet: I am shamefully well protected from the rain, with both umbrella and mackintosh.'

So she had her way, and the door closed behind her. She had something of her uncle Suffield's habit of quoting to herself scraps from her reading—scraps which sounded more or less applicable to the occasion. As she departed from the house, holding her skirts as free of her heels as possible, she quoted with a low laugh to herself: 'Go, call a coach; and let a coach be called; And let the man that calleth be the caller.'

'Cab, miss,' said the driver of a loitering hansom, as she crossed to enter the Park by the Prince of Wales's Gate.

'No, thank you,' she cheerfully replied; and the cabman drew up his horse to see her disappear into the comparative darkness of the Park, and said to a comrade who had loitered up with another cab: 'P'raps she can afford a keb, and p'raps she can't. P'raps she's a lady, and p'raps she ain't nobody in particular. Anyhow, she's a fine young woman, and she 'adn't ought to be a-walkin' in the Park all alone by herself. 'Swelp me! If I 'adn't my keb I'd offer to escorch her myself.'

Isabel had quick ears. She overheard, but she was only amused; and she held on her way to the right. Her nearest route—and despite the dark and wet she saw no reason for diverging from it—was round the eastern end of the Serpentine, and thence directly to the Marble Arch. She had passed the Serpentine—thinking how like an enchanted lake it looked in that half-light that hung over London, and with the soft and velvety blackness of the trees that begirt it—and was stepping briskly along the narrow path that led to the great Archway, when a poor, meagre creature shuffling by suddenly snatched her umbrella from her easy hand and fled over the grass.

'The scoundrel!' exclaimed a man who almost

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as suddenly appeared before her and dashed after the thief. In a few seconds he was up with him, had caught him, and was leading him back to Isabel, himself carrying the recovered umbrella. The victorious stranger had led his captive but a few paces when he wrenched himself free and again fled over the grass. The stranger hesitated an instant whether he should again pursue him, but Isabel called: 'Please let him go!' and he returned, carefully carrying the closed umbrella as if it were of the most precious and fragile nature.

'Madam, permit me,' he said in a rich, genteel voice, which, though somewhat shaken and husky, had the exactitude and modulation of an elocutionist's. He put up the umbrella and handed it to her with a bow of great propriety.

In the dim light she could only see that the polite stranger had a very red and rather puffy face, that his ungloved hand trembled a good deal, and that his spare figure was closely buttoned in a frock-coat against the weather.

'Thank you very much,' said she, 'for your bravery and your kindness.'

'Madam,' said he with solemn deliberation, 'I can never bear to see a lady in distress.'

'Oh, but I was not at all in distress, thank you,' said she. 'If any one is in distress it must be that poor man, and he has lost his plunder after all.'

'He may have been a deserving man,' said he; 'but I need not remind you that appearances are frequently deceitful, madam. Meanwhile, may I accompany you to the broader, better-lighted, and more frequented thoroughfare: it is not wise—if you will permit me to say so—in a lady to perambulate these unfrequented paths alone.'

The man was polite, and seemed harmless, and she thought it would be sheer rudeness to refuse his request, especially since the broader thoroughfare was but a few yards off; so she assented by turning off in that direction. Walking by her side he seemed to halt a little and to lean hard upon his cane.

'I hope,' said she, 'you have not hurt yourself in running after that man?'

'No, madam,' he answered. 'It is only a touch of rheumatism that occasionally supervenes in such weather as the present. I have travelled the round earth over, and have passed through numerous hardships, but I never knew what rheumatism was until a year or two ago when I was camping out in the wilds of America.'

'The round earth over:' where had she heard that phrase? It sounded as if it had once been spoken in her ear. And the man's voice with its cadences and its superfluous fluency: did not that also sound familiar? But the frequented thoroughfare was now reached, and she stopped and signified that there they must part.

'I am exceedingly obliged to you,' said she, tempted a little to imitate his grandiloquence, 'for your polite attentions;' and she bowed, and was passing on.

'Madam,' said he, 'grant me a moment.'

'Yes?' said she.

'You are well protected against the weather, madam,' said he with a bow, doffing his hat—and then she saw he was partially bald, and that he had a moustache as fiercely and inconsequently

bristling, and over it a nose as fiery as Bardolph's own, while his dark eyes shone with a wandering but not unkindly light.

'Yes; I am,' said she.

'You perceive I am not;' and he showed the thin and frayed skirt of his frock-coat.

'I am sorry,' said she, 'that you are likely to spoil my opinion of you.'

'You cannot, madam,' said he, 'be sorrier than I. But I can conceive you are generous and sympathetic, and by no means prudish.'

'Well, what then? What do you wish of me?'

'Between ourselves, madam, I should like to achieve some refreshment. A bottle of Burgundy is excellent, but failing that a glass of Scotch whisky—with water—is not to be despised.'

Isabel found her pocket and her purse, and gave him a shilling.

'Madam,' said he, accepting it and again doffing his hat, 'you are the only woman in the world.'

'Thank you, sir,' said she, and turned and passed on her way.

She was pained and humiliated more than she could have believed possible. Could an educated gentleman really descend to so low and shameless a condition as that? And through what? Suddenly—she knew not at the moment quite why—she thought of her father. Considering all she had heard and guessed, was it within the range of possibility that he could become such a poor creature as that she had parted from? The phrase 'the round earth over' still hung in her ear, and the turn of the man's voice, and she remembered what they reminded her of—her father's last letter, or, at least, the last letter of the man who represented himself as her father. She was struck stock-still an instant, and then she ran back to where she had left the man, and still on; but she did not find him. She returned and passed out of the Park and home to her lodgings by Portman Square and Baker Street, with her thought cast forward to the meeting she had arranged for the following evening; would she then see the man she had encountered that night, or another?

She sat down to read to allay such thoughts, and she accomplished her end; but when she at length went to bed very late, and with her brain made wakeful by the effort of her reading, her ugly and anxious thoughts returned upon her with redoubled force. If her father were really such a one as that man, or perhaps that very one, what should she do? She asked herself—'What if she found he was that very man?'—and she was appalled and ashamed to think that no affection would spring in her heart towards him, and that she would rather he were dead. But her father might not be like the man she had met, or at least not so wretched a creature as he—and then—then she prayed God that she might learn what duty and love would teach. When at length she dropped asleep, she conversed with men with Bardolphian countenances, who all somehow were her uncles; and after a period of tangled discussion with them and uncertainty about the colour of their eyes, she would start awake, and again think of her father.

Next day passed with her usual duties; and in the evening, after she had gone through and marked a pile of her pupils' exercises—she had

been asked to go again to Rutland Gate, but she had excused herself—she set out to find Mrs Ackland Snow's, Tobacconist, near the New North Road. She had discovered that the last delivery of letters in that region, as in her own, began about nine o'clock, and by that hour she intended to be at the door of Mrs Ackland Snow. She had already looked at her map of London, and now she took the train to King's Cross, whence she rode by omnibus to her destination. It was scarcely dark, and she found without difficulty Nelson Street. It was a quiet street, of which she was glad, and it contained only such two- or three-storeyed houses as are peculiar to certain quarters of London, and as appear always striving, but without conspicuous success, to look genteel. Such houses are commonly found to be let in tenements and to swarm with children—the one possession in which the poor are rich. The aspect of the houses, however, cheered Isabel's heart a little; for she thought whoever lived there could not be absolutely sunk to the lowest ebb. She found the shop of 'Ackland Snow, Tobacconist;' but she did not enter at once: she walked slowly up and down on the other side of the way, waiting for the postman to appear; while boys and girls loitering along the pavement with the supper beer wondered why a veiled lady, tall and grand-looking as a duchess, should be 'hanging about' their street. Isabel was beginning to find such notice somewhat embarrassing, when her attention was fixed by the approach of the postman. After a rat-tat here and there, he went to 'Ackland Snow's.' A bell tinkled as he opened the door, which plainly signified that little business was done, and that there was not always a person in attendance in the shop. Isabel crossed the street to enter, but she was no earlier than a man who hurried along the pavement with the aid of a stick, and whom, with some amazement, but no difficulty, she recognised as the man she had met the evening before. Seeing him, she drew back a little, and let him enter first. She therefore neither hindered his question nor was too late to catch it.

'Has that letter come for us to-night, Mrs Snow?' he asked.

Mrs Snow, a stout and comfortable-seeming person, handed him a letter without a word, and at the same moment Isabel stepped forward and put up her veil. The man looked, and his jaw dropped. He turned, took off his hat, set it on the counter, and sat down in a chair with gloomy and tragic resignation.

'Mrs Snow,' said he, frowning and pursing his lips, 'I believe I have got them again!'

'Oh, dear—oh, dear!' said Mrs Snow in a soothing tone. 'Don't say that, Mr Doughty!'

'It grieves me to say it, Mrs Snow,' said he, folding his arms; 'but I believe I have!'

'Please, Mr Doughty, then,' said Mrs Snow, 'like a good man, which you are, don't go and 'ave 'em here.'

'Is your name "Doughty?"' asked Isabel: having heard the name twice, she was now pretty certain of its sound.

'She speaks!' he muttered aside, unfolding his arms and relaxing somewhat the ferocity of his aspect. 'It is—it must be she!' And he slowly turned his eyes on her, and rose. 'Madam,' said

he, 'I am the miserable individual baptismally named Alexander Doughty, at your service.'

'Let me ask you, then, Mr Doughty,' said Isabel, 'how it is I find you receiving a letter addressed to Mr Raynor?' And she pointed to the letter lying, face upward, on the counter.

'Mr Raynor is his friend, ma'am,' said Mrs Snow, 'as he fetches and carries for, and as he has been that kind to nobody knows!'

'A truce to compliments, Mrs Snow,' said Mr Doughty. 'You are trenching on my private affairs; you should not do it, Mrs Snow; you must not.' Then turning to Isabel, he said: 'I am a journalist, madam, and Mr Raynor is my chief.'

'I wish to see Mr Raynor,' said Isabel. 'Will you take me to him?'

'Your desire to see the chief, madam,' said Mr Doughty, 'is natural, and even laudable, but'—And Mr Doughty for once seemed at a loss for a word.

'You wonder,' said Isabel, 'why I should wish to see him: that letter to him is from me: I am Isabel Raynor.'

'Land of Goshen!' exclaimed Doughty. 'The only woman in the world is Miss Raynor, and I never guessed it!—Let us withdraw, Miss Raynor, and speak of this. I perceive an explanation is due to you.' Then as he approached the door he turned and said to her in a low voice: 'I must tell you he does not know of this.—Good-night, Mrs Snow,' he said aloud, as he held the door open.

Isabel passed out, and he followed her, buttoning up his frock-coat.

(To be continued.)

#### A BRAZILIAN CONVICT ISLAND.

THE island of Fernando Noronha, lying in the Atlantic Ocean, about two hundred miles from the north-east coast of Brazil, and three degrees south of the equator, is a fairly familiar landmark to English seamen. A large number of sailing-vessels sight it on their outward voyage to India and the colonies, running so far to the westward in order to make the most of the trade-winds. The majority of steamers, too, bound for either the east or west coast of South America pass within view of it on the outward and homeward journey. Few English ships, however, in either the naval or mercantile marine have ever called there; for the Brazilians, to whom it belongs, have made it a penal settlement, and being only a small island—some five and a half miles long by a mile and a quarter broad—it possesses no opening for trade. In 1827, when His Majesty's ship *Chanticleer* visited it, the inhabitants numbered only two hundred, and of these, sixty were the soldiers of the garrison. In 1832 Darwin, in the course of his voyage in the *Beagle*, spent a few hours there, but only gives a short notice of it from a naturalist's point of view. In 1871 H.M.S. *Bristol* paid a visit to the island, one result of which was a fresh Admiralty chart in 1872. In 1873 the *Challenger* anchored off the island in order to collect specimens of its fauna and flora; but having, unfortunately, neglected to obtain permission from the administrator of the



province of Pernambuco, within whose jurisdiction it lies, the Governor would not take upon himself the responsibility of authorising the collection being made. The convicts at that date numbered fourteen hundred, while there were one hundred and sixty soldiers in the garrison. Finally, in 1884, there is the account given by the officers of H.M.S. *Amethyst*, according to whom the number of the convicts had risen to two thousand two hundred and fifty, and of the soldiers to two hundred and fifty. Since that date there is no record of any English ship having visited the island, till the cable-laying steamer *Silvertown*, on board of which was the writer of this paper, anchored off there in September 1891.

The *Silvertown* was sounding along the proposed route of the cable which has just been laid from Pernambuco in Brazil to St Louis, Senegal, touching at Fernando de Noronha on the way; and it was, in consequence, necessary to go ashore there to make the requisite arrangements for its reception. Before noon, on the morning of the 18th of September, the island was sighted. As the ship approached from the south-west, sounding as she went, the curious peak, a thousand feet in height, and visible for thirty miles around, rose slowly up, like a huge column above the land, and from this direction appeared to be leaning slightly on one side. The island at a distance seemed perfectly barren, not a patch of green being anywhere apparent. Soon after four o'clock, the anchor was let go off the settlement on the northern shore of the island, and under a cliff, surmounted by a fort commanding the small bay where landing is effected. The gig was manned at once, and Mr M. H. Gray, the engineer in charge of the expedition, who had provided himself with the necessary papers from the Governor of Pernambuco, put off for the shore, accompanied by the captain and myself. It was a lovely afternoon, the heat of the day being tempered by the fresh south-east trade-winds. The principal buildings of the settlement, made of stone and whitewashed, stood out clear and distinct in the transparent atmosphere; but we looked in vain for the dense woods described by former visitors as clothing the island down to the water's edge; not a single tree was visible. Rounding the base of the steep fort cliff, a little cove opened out, and a group of men ashore beckoned to us to beach the boat where they were standing, for there was no landing-stage or pier of any kind to be seen. As we drew near this spot, three men on horseback came cantering down from the town, and dismounting, hastily directed those already assembled there—evidently convicts—to assist in beaching the boat, and then awaited our arrival bareheaded, in the courteous Brazilian manner. The boat was quickly run ashore, and after exchanging salutations with the three horsemen, the eldest of whom proved to be the second in command on the island, we began to ascend a pathway, made for the most part of rough stone steps and leading to the settlement.

A few remarks were exchanged in Portuguese; and then, half-way up the hill, a convict dressed in ordinary European attire, but with a sergeant's stripe on the arm of his holland jacket, made his appearance, hat in hand; and as soon as he spoke, it was evident that he was an Englishman, and had been summoned to act as interpreter

between us. He was the only English convict, we were told, on the island, and indeed the only European, with the exception of a German, who found his way there for forging paper money in Rio de Janeiro. The Englishman's crime was murder, having killed a Brazilian railway official. He was thin and worn, and his features bore traces of the suffering and hardship he had undergone in the early part of his imprisonment. Being informed of the reason for which he had been summoned, he accompanied us, still bare-headed beneath the rays of the tropical sun, up the hill; but his services were not often required, for the ascent was steep, and little breath was left for talking. At length we had climbed up to the settlement, and reaching the central square, entered the Governor's house. Here we were ushered into the reception room, a somewhat bare-looking apartment, with a sofa on one side of it, and two rows of chairs running from either end down the centre of the room, and facing each other.

The Governor, a fine-looking man of about fifty years of age, soon made his appearance, and welcomed us courteously. Several of his staff, including the secretary, doctor, and three or four officers, accompanied him, and we were invited to sit down. The Governor's wife and two daughters, merry, dark-eyed young girls of about fourteen and fifteen years respectively, shortly joined us; and after their introduction, the discussion of business was commenced. The English convict, who had entered with us, stood behind the Governor, and conducted the interpretation, eliciting several merry peals of laughter from the young ladies by the mistakes he made in the discharge of his unaccustomed office, occasionally explaining a remark to the Governor in English and to us in Portuguese. The conference was soon concluded, for the points at issue were few, and then the Governor proposed to show us one of the prisons, while horses were being saddled to take us into the interior of the island.

Leading the way, he conducted us across the square formed by the Government offices, the chapel, storehouse, and workshop, till we reached the penitentiary—a large structure, with heavy doors, barred and bolted. The majority of the convicts, we were told, are allowed their personal freedom, living in huts made by themselves, while the prisons are reserved for unruly characters. The doors of the penitentiary were opened by a dark-skinned, half-caste warder, himself a convict—the best behaved are entrusted with such offices—and we passed under an archway leading to an inner court. In this archway, on the left-hand side, there was a heavy door, for which the jangling keys were again required, and we entered a chamber from which all light had been excluded. The warder, however, loosened and threw back a pair of iron shutters guarding a barred casement, and a solitary occupant was revealed, lying in a half-recumbent position on the stone floor in the centre of the chamber. The light seemed to bewilder him, and he looked from one to the other of us with a dazed expression. The prisoner was a well-made, almost pure-bred negro, apparently about forty years of age, with curly hair, sinewy neck, and a curiously puckered forehead, giving him a puzzled look, as if life had proved an unfathomable problem to him. When

we became accustomed to the light, we saw that he was secured, his right wrist and right ankle being shackled together in an iron frame chained to the bottom of a stake fixed firmly in the flooring, so as to leave him hardly any freedom of action. The Governor made a sign, and his manacles being undone, he was invited to move to the casement and enjoy the light of day. But his confined position had sadly cramped his muscles, and it was with some difficulty that he dragged himself to the barred window. Here he took a seat on a rough grass mat he carried with him, and proceeded to watch us with a vacant curiosity, while every now and then his frame was shaken with a racking cough, for the wind blows strong and almost chilly towards sunset in this ocean island, and he was scantily clad. The Governor drew our attention to several rude sketches scratched on the wall, representing daggers, knives, and such-like murderous instruments. These were the prisoner's handiwork. It appeared that he was subject to fits of madness, during which, unless pinioned, he was dangerous to himself as well as to his warders. As soon as he recovered, he would be set at liberty again to work in the fields. He had lately been thus engaged when one of his fits seized him, and he had all but murdered a fellow-convict; hence the necessity of the shackles with which we found him secured.

On the other side of the archway we were shown into a large ward, with a row of cells built down one side of it. These were reserved for the most refractory characters. The warder opened the door of one of them, which proved to be completely dark, and very little more than six feet high by three feet wide. The Governor called on its occupant, who was invisible, to make his appearance; and after a short interval, a fine negro at least six feet high stepped sullenly out. He was magnificently made, his figure being displayed to full advantage by a scanty waistcloth. Unarmed though he was, he looked as if he could overpower half-a-dozen men of like build to his warder. He had always been a most troublesome prisoner, we were told, and could only be reduced to submission by two or three days' solitary confinement in a dark cell. After a few questions had been addressed to him, which he answered in sulkily monosyllables, he was allowed to withdraw; and we passed on through the other portions of the building containing the less serious offenders, till we entered the square again.

Here we found some six or seven hundred convicts, drawn up in as many columns, to attend roll-call and a short evening service. The roll-call had been read, and the prisoners were now singing an evening hymn. It was a striking scene, and one to which the time and place lent a certain impressiveness. Men of all ages, some with gray hair, some in the full flush of youth, were to be seen in the convict ranks. The majority were dark-complexioned, with a large preponderance of the negro element, for the lower Brazilian classes have intermingled a good deal with the native Africans originally imported into their country as slaves. Their dress consisted of old and faded European clothes, or soiled and tattered cotton garments, worn in native fashion. The hymn which they were singing with the African's nasal

and metallic intonation, struck the ear like a plaintive dirge raised by a band of men marooned upon a silent and deserted ocean island. At the conclusion of the hymn, the whole company knelt down while the priest pronounced a short blessing, and then the convicts were dismissed to their habitations.

On returning to the Governor's house, we found the horses ready saddled, and started off, a party of twelve, to visit another prison two miles inland. The sun had sunk by the time we reached the prison, a low, one-storeyed building, erected on the top of some rising ground in the centre of the island. Dismounting, we were conducted through the outer door under an archway into the courtyard beyond. On the left-hand side of this courtyard, the windows—mere barred casements without glass—of an ill-lighted ward were visible, and from them proceeded the confused noise of high-pitched voices. These, however, were suddenly hushed as the door leading into the ward was opened and the Governor entered. We followed him, and found ourselves in a long chamber, the darkness of which seemed to be rendered only more apparent by two or three ill-burning oil lamps suspended from the ceiling. Most of the occupants were gathered at a table running down the centre; but several were stretched on rude constructions on either side, serving the purpose of beds. All were silent, and regarded us with listless curiosity.

'Where is Pedro?' asked the Governor. Pedro, we were informed, was one of the worst characters on the island. He had been banished there for a peculiarly brutal murder, having tied his wife up in a sack and stabbed at her through the material with a large knife till she expired. Since his arrival at Fernando Noronha, he had killed two of his fellow-convicts.

We were curious to catch sight of so incorrigible a malefactor, and expected to see him dragged from a solitary cell, bound hand and foot. Presently, however, a man perfectly unfettered, about fifty years of age, somewhat under medium stature, with stooping shoulders and grizzled hair, made his appearance, and we were told that this was the notorious criminal. When he had come to a halt in front of us, he smiled somewhat fatuously, and blinked with his bleary eyes. He was of negro origin, and suffering from the weak sight often observable in his race in later years. In response to one or two remarks addressed to him by the Governor, he smirked, as if he felt he was a credit to the settlement, but disclaimed such public recognition of his merits, and then he was dismissed; and after a short inspection of the rest of the building, we returned to the stone-paved terrace in front of the prison. Here, in the light of the full moon which had just risen above the hills to the east, we sat down on some benches brought out for us, and were served with cocoa-nuts freshly gathered from a neighbouring palm.

On our way back I learned something of the penal settlement and the management of its inhabitants. The trees, I was told, which, as late as the visit of H.M.S. *Amethyst* in 1884, covered nearly the whole island, had been cut down within the last few years, partly to leave more ground clear for cultivation, and partly to withdraw from the convicts the means of making boats in which to escape. With the exception of some

cocoa-nut groves, which were carefully tended, only isolated bunches of trees were now left standing. This wholesale denudation has produced some marked effects, beneficial and the reverse. On the one hand, the ground reclaimed has proved so fertile that the island is able not only to produce enough to support all its inhabitants, but also to grow castor and cotton plants in large quantities for exportation. Maize, beans, cassava, sweet-potatoes, bananas, melons, and sugar-cane thrive equally well on the rich soil. With the clearance of the timber has also disappeared an obnoxious stinging plant which overran the island, and produced a very painful irritation in those who touched it, lasting three or four days in great intensity. On the other hand, the picturesqueness of the scenery has been destroyed, and the reddish-brown doves which swarmed in the woods have suffered a large diminution in their numbers. More serious is the lessened rainfall owing to the absence of trees; and to such an extent has it decreased, that the chances of a severe drought are becoming every year more probable. In the wet season, though it may be raining all round the island, the storm frequently passes away without shedding one drop of moisture on it.

At the time of our visit there were eighteen hundred convicts in the settlement. Of these, one thousand are divided into ten companies of a hundred each, under the command of a sergeant, himself a convict. They live in outlying villages, and are employed at work in the fields and plantations, and tend the sheep and cattle. The rest live in the town, and are engaged at different handicrafts in the workshop, or fish in catamarans, the native Brazilian canoe, too roughly built to attempt to escape in, being merely two or three logs bound together and propelled by sail or paddle. All have to work for their food and clothing, which they obtain from the Government stores in proportion to the work performed. Some of the convicts themselves are allowed to keep private stores, where their fellows may purchase any little extras they require beyond the bare necessities of life. Convicts of good behaviour are allowed to have their wives on the island, should they be willing to come. There are two schools, one for the children of officers and soldiers, and one for the children of convicts; the masters in both cases are convicts. At the age of twelve, the sons of convicts are sent to a military school at Pernambuco. The girls are allowed to stay on the island with their parents, if they wish to do so. To maintain order among these eighteen hundred prisoners, there were at the time of our visit only sixty soldiers in garrison. Little difficulty, however, is experienced in their management, punishment for ill behaviour being detention in the penitentiary, flogging, or, in extreme cases, banishment to Rat Island, a small uninhabited island about a mile long at the north-east of Fernando, where its occupant would have to keep himself alive by fishing.

When we re-entered the town and had rested for a short time on the terrace in front of the Governor's house—his hospitable invitation to supper was unavoidably declined—we took our leave, and set off for the beach. The English convict, who seemed to have complete personal liberty, accompanied us down to the water, and

talked with me on the way as to the chances of his obtaining pardon and release.

We gained the beach, and thanking him for his escort, bade him good-bye, entered our boat, and pushed off from the shore. As we were carried over the heaving waters, glistening in the clear light of the full moon, we could see him standing motionless on the spot where we had left him, dreaming, no doubt, of the day for which he longed, when he would get his pardon, and row off to the ship which was to restore him to life and liberty. The best that we can wish him is that nothing will ever occur to rob him of the illusion which alone makes existence supportable to him.

### 'THE HINT O' HAIRST.'

#### CHAPTER IV.—CONCLUSION.

Willie's fair and Willie's rare!  
And Willie's wondrous bonnie,  
And Willie's hecht to marry me,  
Gin e'er he marries ony!

How the little verse had stayed with him during all his comings and goings in poor stifled London! When he drove from his hotel to his lawyer's the hansom cab wheels played the time, and he found himself, in the middle of Piccadilly, that never thins or slacks for any reason but only congests more and more, singing the pretty words, and thinking of the sweet bird-like voice that had sung them with so modest a boldness by the Erne's running river, where was a sound at spate-time that gave hints of Piccadilly. That merle of his!—He was always thinking of her; when should he see her? what should they say to one another?

He loved, and had always loved, every bird that sang in Ardlach woods, and it was only a case of loving more, of loving quite differently this one bird that was his, and that would flute for him only.

Willie Gordon had the strong vein of sentiment that distinguishes his countrymen the world over—that is heard in their music, that speaks in their poetry, that is buried in their hearts. There was something in his love, a quality very subtle and strange, that can only grow in the soul of a true Scot—that is travestied merely in the sentimentality of a German.

He was in London still, going about this difficult business, thinking of his sweet Scotch lassie, when a telegram reached him: 'John very ill. Come at once.—Rose.' It had been at his hotel for hours, and they had not known how to catch him, or when he would be in to get it. Willie only stopped to put a few letters and small matters in his pocket, while the hall porter looked out the first train. He had three-quarters of an hour to catch it, and he went up-stairs and packed his portmanteau in a leisurely way, sorely troubled all the time.

In an hour he was being whirled northward on the North-western line, pondering and wondering what news would await him at Edinburgh, where Rose would surely have another telegram waiting for him: at their first stoppage he sent her a wire to this effect, for there was always a delay in Edinburgh before getting into the



Inverness train, and he would have time to run up to his club.

The last letter from Foresk, a few days ago, had told him that John was worse, was in bed indeed, and that the Inverness doctor who reinforced Dr Herries on occasion had come over more than once. This, however, had often happened before. Ever since John had come home they had been subject to alarms of the same kind, when, for a few weeks, the attack might at any moment take a serious turn. Willie was therefore not over-anxious, and now and then allowed his mind to recur to thoughts of Aveline, whom he always pictured singing in the woods by the Erne. He had never seen her in a house; he wondered how she would look sitting by a table with the lamplight falling across her hands and hair—sewing, perhaps, or just calmly reading, with the eyelids slanted over the dark gray eyes.

On the whole, it was not altogether a painful journey; nothing in the world would ever be so painful again as it had been before. Had he not always now a fair beacon-light to rest his eyes on? some one thing in his life that would always be beautiful, always be cheery, inspiring, and comforting? The whole tide of his being set towards Aveline Lockhart: if ever there was a faithful, unerring, unwavering love in this world, it was Willie Gordon's.

He arrived in Edinburgh and walked up to his club; yes, there was a telegram for him—it was a long one.

It told him that his brother was dead.

Willie sat down heavily in the Club library with the two sheets in his hand; at this difficult moment he had no consciousness of his own feelings; it was quite mechanical on his part when he got up and walked into the autumn brilliance of Princes Street. Two or three men he knew recognised him and nodded to him; but Willie never saw them, though he saw very dimly the great Castle rising out of a morning mist that lent a dimness and unreality to the bases of its rocks. He was only just in time for his train.

He threw himself back in the corner of his compartment, and made the journey gravely, facing and controlling the strong feeling that overcame him.

He had not loved his brother, and he had been forced to disapprove fatally of him. He could have admitted that it was a good thing for every one that a life which was not only useless but hurtful should be ended—a burden to himself, a sorer burden to others; but none of these admissions, reasonable though they were, had anything to do with the deep feeling—which is family feeling, and is nowhere more at home than in Scottish blood—that filled him in the first presence of his loss.

Now, indeed, his woodland merle could not sing to him! All personal troubles would melt before the music of her voice; the world's woes would recede to a distance at which they would be both bearable and picturesque; but this grief, dark, undefined, but potent, lying in the depths of his being, coursing in his veins—with this Willie Gordon retired within himself, neither suffering nor thinking much, but just watching alone beside it.

In the silent greeting between him and Rose, in the kiss and warm embrace he gave his mother, was his whole strong heart surging up in him. Rose Gordon looked only straighter and paler and sterner than in her frequent strenuous moods; but even she had been shaken to a wondering sort of fear and sorrow at the moment of John's death. This had passed very quickly, and when Willie saw her she was again that slim, clear-eyed figure of Justice, with small leanings to Mercy, to which he was accustomed.

It was for his mother that Willie felt: all the way driving to the house, and often in the train, he had been wondering how the poor gentle woman would bear herself. The disappointment in her favourite boy was an old story now; but, at his death, all the brightness of his promise, all the pride of earlier days, would rise up in her mind and serve to emphasise the impression of his futility. Why are such men born as John Gordon? Perhaps to break the hearts of the women who love them.

Willie spent most of the evening after his arrival sitting with his mother in her own room and stroking her hands. They scarcely said a word, these two; and from an adjoining room came the sound of Rose's pen as she wrote letters and cards to the immense family circle.

By the morning, when he was called on to attend to much business, Willie had resumed his simple, every-day demeanour; he had looked at and accepted the situation, and, though he said nothing about it, he had found a measure for his sorrow.

He was already accustomed to the 'Sir William' which the servants and dependents had at once, with the mobility of their kind, endured him. Next day, when the warm afternoon, spent in letter-writing, had waned, he and Kate went out together to the Erne side, not exactly because he hoped to meet Aveline, but because he wanted to be quiet and to think. Bowers had dropped a hint of fever present in the village; and Dr Herries had said that there was a complication in the nature of Sir John's last illness which suggested he had not escaped from infection by the disease that was hovering in the air. This had to be reflected on. If it were so, it proved that God had not forgotten His world: that terrible Judaic justice was still meted out where it was due.

The end of autumn—the 'hint o' hairst'—was a dangerous season; only the year before, Rose had suffered from a sort of low fever, which was very unaccountable, but which, Dr Herries had not seen fit to mention, bore a resemblance to the illness that laid up one or two of the villagers.

The finger had been laid lightly on innocent Rose; but upon John, clothed with the sins of his selfishness, God's whole hand had been laid.

With the faint sweet scents of the woodland all about him, Willie analysed these thoughts one after another; but having looked at them, he saw they were not good to dwell on. Then the beauty and the mystery of Nature stole in upon his mind; the light chill in the timorous wind that played so tenderly among the brittle leaves refreshed him and cheered him. He watched the uneasy swallows, which a single cold



day would cause to gather about the big elms near Foresk South Lodge, piping their shrill roll-call among the branches, and shaking down the last of their golden store.

There was that other song of Aveline's that came to him somehow: what was it?

It's dowie in the hint o' hairst

At the wa'gang o' the swallow,

When the wind grows cauld, and the burns grow bauld,

And the woods are hingin' yellow.

Well, that was this afternoon!—Only the winds would be colder still before the swallows went; Erne would come raging through his rocky channel with the volume of all the mountain and moorland burns in his arms, and the first violence of his winter temper in his stream.

Willie sat on the stone where last time she had been beside him, and the threads of his life began to look as though they might be woven into a bright piece some day; so fleet is time, so quickly does it hurry over crises, or rather, so much living does it crowd into those dull, dreich days which follow them, that the future takes shape out of the broken fragments of our lives, and dark veils taken from our eyes leave a clearer vision.

To-morrow, he would follow his brother to the grave, and listen to the service that he had last heard at his father's death.

Then he would have to enmesh himself in the difficult business that surrounds the succession to an estate, and in his case it would be doubly complicated. He would have a life as busy and as full as it had once been idle; he would devote himself to the tenants; they were his tenants now; cut down the expenses at Foresk in such a manner as not to affect his mother and sister; and wisely employ what money he could lay hands on for the immediate improvements required in the village. Among other things, he would be engaged to Aveline, openly, publicly, proudly. He was quite sensible enough to feel that after the constraint and difficulty, the tedium and repression of his earlier years, this liberty and freedom that was coming to him was quite deserved.

He sat, patting his dog and talking to her, sometimes smiling even, as visions of his future showed themselves to him—the future for which he was so ready to use his best strength to make bright for himself and others.

It would be a sweet and lovely home when Aveline, his mother, and Rose—all of whom loved him so—lived at Foresk in the fullness of peace and human-kindness. Their hearts would not then be wrung with tales of suffering they had no means to appease.

In the quiet talk he and his mother had had together the night before, when a subdued sorrow and a timid, just born peace had been apparent in Lady Gordon's manner, Willie had shadowed out the idea very diffidently, and had stolen two or three careful glances at her face: it was a new thing for Willie to be nervous, but when we are making a half-confidence, one eye must always be open to see that our friend's mind has not filled in the other half from imagination.

Lady Gordon had no idea who Willie could be referring to in this visionary, halting conversation, and, in pondering it over afterwards with

Rose, decided that he had been speaking generally, and that, as yet, he had not seen the girl he would care to make his wife. Indeed, as Rose said in her practical way, where could he have seen her?

And there Willie sat, thinking over the new future, the new hopes, and reflecting upon the old troubles, now passing away; there was no doubt he would be a good landlord, no doubt that his tenants and his estate would be his first care; and as a rider to every suggestion of his mind came the silver finish of his love for Aveline.

In all that scene he saw her, and his eyes rested on the opposite bank, where her gaze had so often strayed; he saw no more pink scabious, not a flower at all, but just the dry gold leaves hurrying over each dead stem and the decaying calyx. The beech-trees had spread a red carpet underneath their branches, and the elms had laid their shadow court with cloth of gold.

In a few days he would meet her here, and have his first long, uninterrupted talk with her. To Willie Gordon this new confidence between himself and his heart's love would be something more fresh and precious than a May-dewdrop in a daisy's eye—it would be something as rarely held in the hand of a man.

Under the influence of this hope he got off the stone, and Kate followed him through the woods, making the passage over the Lover's Leap as usual beneath her master's arm.

Half way up the hill-slope Willie paused; he and the Foresk woods were in the shadow of their own hills, but the sun, coming through a dip, gleamed on the fire of the rowan clusters on the Ardlach side of the river and threw handfuls of red gold into the windows of the Manse: somewhere, perhaps touched by that last sunshine, she was, and there was no one on whom the sun did so well to linger.

When he turned to go on his way, he saw Rose coming towards him.

'I wanted to meet you,' she said; 'I had something to say.'

She turned and walked with him; already she had on a black gown of some sort. After a moment she stopped, and he followed her example; the path was narrow, and each leaned against a tree facing the other; Kate, a little in advance, turned her black head to see if they were coming on, and showed the rose-pink of her mouth and the brilliant glister of her teeth.

'Willie,' Rose began, in some little difficulty, 'I am sure you have not heard that John had—had caught the fever that is in the village?'

'I have,' said Willie gravely.

'And do you know all about it? Did Jeffreys tell you how it chanced?'

'No; Herries only hinted it, and—I did not question him. Where was the use?'

A little pause fell.

'I think you ought to know,' Rose said slowly. 'There have been several deaths in the village lately, of children especially. Miss Lockhart used to take great interest in the people, and nursed many of them. I always knew that, and liked it in her. One day, when mother and I were out calling, she determined herself to appeal to John. She had no idea what was the matter

with the children; she only knew that the unhealthiness of their houses was killing them. She came straight from the deathbed of a little child to Foresk, and asked for John. He saw her; she was there a long time—at least over half an hour; Jeffreys saw her of course, and heard about it, but—John told me. He caught the infection from her, we think.

Rose's voice had sunk very low, and her eyes were fixed on her brother; it was as though she wanted him to appreciate the terrible justice of Sir John's death without her mention of it.

There was a long pause, and then Willie, whose mind had indeed grasped this light upon the subject, but who was engaged in dreaming of Aveline's gentle courage, said, more with the air of saying something than because he was interested in it: 'Of course one has heard of that—some one carrying infection in their clothes and passing it on to another, who'—

'But you know the poor girl is dead too?' said Rose with simple tenderness, and looking sad for the fate that had overtaken her; 'that is so terrible, isn't it?'

'She'—

'Yes, poor thing! She died—I think four days ago. It is very terrible,' looking blankly through the woodland; 'it'—

She said no more, for her brother swayed round heavily against the tree trunk, put up his arms, and buried his face in them.

'Willie!'—She started forward and put a hand on his sleeve. He said nothing; but when she continued to question him he motioned her to go away; and after a little, very perplexed and puzzled, she went.

There is nothing more to say about Willie Gordon. The winds grew colder through the woodland, the autumn mists wound their shrouds around the hills, and the swallows twittered and gathered closer in the big elm-tree where their meeting was every year.

He was alone in the 'hint o' hairst,' and it was nearly the 'wa'gang o' the swallow;' but the lines of the old song that Willie had never remembered wailed through the woodlands now:

But oh, it's dowie far to see  
The wa'gang o' her the heart gangs wi',  
The dead-set o' a shinin' e'e  
That darkens the weary world on thee.

He had met the tragedy of his youth through another's sinning; he had had one hope for a little, and then it had been taken.

Truly, his love had been one of those things that 'come and gae,' and who would watch the pink scabious by Erne's bank next year? *His* flower, *his* love, the sun that had shone out over *his* life for a few days—dead, buried, out of sight of his eyes, deaf to his voice, where his hands could never reach her, however they might yearn.

That a Nemesis should have overtaken his brother—that was justice; that he should have died of the very scourge he had prepared for others—that was justice, bare, awesome, not to be questioned or entreated; but that Aveline should have been the means, the instrument in the hand of Fate, for Fate to use and throw away, and that he, Willie, should be the life-long mourner—what was that?

When he was able to think of it, his revolt

against the seeming injustice of this world filled all his soul; but he did not think so till later, and it is as well not to follow him in that mood. Better to leave him in the dim early autumn night, alone in the great woods, with only his dog beside him; to leave him leaning half-lifelessly against a tree-trunk, the rough fine pattern of the crisp lichens impressed upon a cheek that was wet with the first tears his manhood had ever known.

THE END.

## THE MONTH:

### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

BIMETALLIC wire is coming into use for telephonic and various other electrical purposes, and is said to possess in many situations great advantages. For instance, a compound wire consisting of a cast-steel core with an outside layer of copper has been found most serviceable for telegraphic work along the sea-coast or in any places where there is constant exposure to fog and damp. The two metals adhere to one another perfectly, and there is no tendency to peeling or separation even when the wire is much bent about. Another compound wire which is highly spoken of as possessing unusual tensile strength and low electrical resistance, has an aluminium bronze core contained in an outer covering of copper bronze.

The United States consul at Singapore has recently made an interesting Report on the development of tea-cultivation by the Sultan of Johore (Malay Peninsula). Tea, like coffee and pepper, is not indigenous to the soil; but its growth has been rapid, and the flavour of the product is delicious. The tea-gardens on the Sultan's territory have an area of eight hundred acres, and they are cultivated by Chinese, Javanese, and Malayan labourers, the most rapid and skilful pickers being women and children. After the leaves are picked, they are sprinkled over bamboo trays, and are placed under cover in the upper floor of the factory until they are withered. They are then put, in charges of fifty pounds at a time, into a rolling box, when the leaves are pressed, twisted, and rolled without any loss of juice. Next, after giving a short time for fermentation, the leaves are placed in the 'sirocco,' which consists of an iron chest, over a furnace, which is kept at two hundred and sixty degrees Fahrenheit. This chest has four trays at different levels, and the charge of tea is put in first at the highest level for a few minutes, then turned over by hand and put lower down, and so on until it has been subjected to the four different degrees of heat. It is then 'made-tea,' after which it is sorted into grades by a machine which has sieves of different degrees of fineness, packed up, and placed upon the market. Specimens of this Johore tea will be sent by the consul to the Chicago Exhibition.

Boughton's 'Telephotos' is a contrivance for day or night signalling which has recently been described and illustrated in *The Scientific American*. It may be briefly described as consisting of a keyboard arrangement in connection with a signal staff nearly thirty feet long, which is furnished

throughout its length with more than one hundred incandescent lamps of thirty-two candle power. By manipulation of the keys these lamps may be illuminated in sections, so as to form the various combinations of the Morse dot and dash alphabet. It is obvious that the arrangement is only applicable where a dynamo and engine are available.

The great tower now being built at the Chicago Exhibition will not have much resemblance to its prototype at Paris, save that it will be made entirely of steel. It will have a height of five hundred and sixty feet, which is about one-third less than the Eiffel Tower, but it will have no lifts. Around it, from top to bottom, will be a winding spiral railway, measuring about one mile in actual length, with two lines of rail, one for the ascent and the other for the return. This railway will be worked by electricity, and there will be a number of cars, each lighted by six incandescent lamps. At the top of the tower will be an observatory with a cluster of search-lights. The cost of the erection is estimated at more than three hundred thousand pounds, and the promoters hope not only to make it pay but to reap a large profit.

The threatened revival of crinoline, about which we have heard so much lately, is a matter of far more importance to commerce than would at first seem evident. When the fashion last became prevalent about thirty years ago, many fortunes are said to have been made in the hoop-iron industry, owing to the demand for those ribbons of metal which were required before the human form could be deformed in the manner which fashion dictated. The most rational arguments against the revival are its thoroughly inartistic character, and the death-trap which it represents in juxtaposition with open fireplaces.

On the Great Northern Railway a new method of signalling to the driver of a train in motion has recently been tried. The semaphore, of small size, is on the engine itself immediately before the driver's eyes. Electrical contact is secured by a brush fixed on the engine, which rubs against a wire or rail on the track. We believe that contrivances of a somewhat similar kind have been suggested in past times, but have not been found of practical value. This device may happily prove an exception.

If every house does not possess its proverbial skeleton, it certainly has one or more chimneys which produce a steady down-draught when the wind happens to be in a certain direction. The Champion Chimney-pot, invented by Mr W. Peyton, seems well adapted from its construction to cure the evil. It consists of a tube, near the top of which are a number of inverted trumpet-shaped openings, so that, in whatever direction the wind may be blowing, some of these openings must receive it, and cause an upward draught in the chimney which they surround. The contrivance has no loose or moving parts, and can be as easily cleaned as a chimney of the ordinary pattern.

The establishment of an Observatory on the summit of Mont Blanc, after being discussed for some years, will soon be an accomplished fact. The accumulation of hardened snow on the site chosen is so deep that it was quite impossible to found the building on the solid rock. It

has therefore been determined to dig its foundations in the snow itself. The materials for this erection, which are mostly of wood, are now being carried piecemeal up the mountain, and two huts for the shelter of the workmen employed, one at the Grands Mulets, and another at the Grand Rocher Rouge, have been built.

A useful suggestion with regard to the application of the common typewriting machine to correspondence in cipher has been made by a M. Erve in one of the French newspapers. He points out that a favourite and simple method of cipher-writing has for a long time consisted in the substitution of certain letters of the alphabet for others, so that, for instance, A shall be represented by C, B will stand for R, and so on. Working on this principle, the types on a machine could be so transposed that the operator would have no difficulty whatever in writing a letter which would apparently be a confused jumble of characters. But his correspondent would copy the letter with a machine which had been rearranged in a similar manner, when the letters would retranspose themselves automatically, and the original writer's meaning would become plainly set forth. The idea is an ingenious one, and will doubtless commend itself to many business men.

It is interesting to note that the revised Patent Act, which came into operation on January 1, 1884, has had the effect of increasing the number of applications for patents fourfold. In the year 1883, when the old Act was in force, the number of applications amounted to close upon six thousand. In the year which has just drawn to a close they were 24,166. These figures show that the easier terms upon which a patent can now be obtained have been productive of good results; but we are still far behind the American Patent Office, in which the fees charged are so small that inventors receive far greater encouragement to patent their ideas.

M. Chaveau lately brought before the French Academy a curious experiment with regard to the appreciation of colour. He points out that if a person go to sleep near a window in such a position that the reflected light from white clouds falls equally on both eyes, he will on awakening have the impression for a short period that the room and all its belongings are bathed in green light. As the phenomenon is only observable after awakening from profound slumber, it is presumed that there are distinct nerve-centres for green, as well as for the other primary colour sensations, red and violet, and that the green first regain activity after sleep.

The loss of life by snake-bite in India alone reaches every year some thousands of cases, and although we occasionally hear of remedies which are said to be effectual, the death-rate continues without diminution. We are glad to note, however, that at last something is to be done with a view to check this terrible mortality. A Snake Laboratory, the only institution of its kind in the world, is to be established at Calcutta, and will soon be in full working order. At this institution the principal work done will be the investigation of the properties of snake-poison and the examination and testing of so-called cures. It is interesting to note that the cost of this Snake Laboratory has been partially provided for by a

Bengali gentleman, who has contributed towards the expenses fifteen thousand rupees.

In an interesting paper read before the Society of Arts by Mr B. H. Brough on the Mining Industries of South Africa as shown at the Kimberley Exhibition, diamond-mining is very fully dealt with. It is stated that, comparing all available sources of information, the Cape Colony has exported, since the first discovery of diamonds in South Africa in 1867, more than fifty million carats of the precious stone, representing a value of nearly seventy million pounds sterling. This enormous quantity would weigh more than ten tons, and if piled in a heap would form a pyramid six feet high, with a base nine feet square.

To a recent number of the *Annals of Scottish Natural History*, Colonel Duthie contributes an interesting paper on the needless destruction of wild-birds' eggs, and egg-collecting generally. He divides certain collectors into three classes—namely, the aimless, the greedy, and the mercenary, and contrasts them with the true collector, who is a naturalist collecting eggs as a means of acquiring knowledge. Workers of this latter type should, he asserts, do their own collecting, and should not receive eggs into their cabinets unless authenticated by some one whom they can trust. If this were done, egg-collecting as a trade, with its concomitant abuses, would disappear.

An idea has gained currency during the past few years that the tomato as an article of diet is liable to produce or encourage the terrible disease of cancer, and not long ago it was also stated that the use of this vegetable had been forbidden at the Cancer Hospital. So widely spread has this notion become, that Dr Marsden, chairman of the Medical Committee of the Cancer Hospital, London, has thought it advisable to give it official contradiction. He says that his Committee have been inundated with letters on this subject, and he begs publication for the following statement, which we hope will settle the matter once for all. It is the opinion of the Committee 'that tomatoes neither predispose to nor excite cancer formation, and that they are not injurious to those suffering from this disease, but, on the contrary, are a very wholesome article of diet, particularly so if cooked.'

The scheme by which the vast energy of the Falls of Niagara is to be utilised by the employment of huge dynamo-machines has its counterpart on this side of the Atlantic. Mr B. H. Thwaites proposes to distribute power over the chief English manufacturing areas by burning coal at the pit-mouth, where it is comparatively cheap, and turning it into electricity in the form of high-pressure alternating currents. In this way he would from one station supply the whole of Lancashire and the Ship Canal with energy; from another would be supplied Yorkshire; while a third would serve the Midlands and London.

Boise City, Idaho, is about to make use of the hot-water springs in its neighbourhood for heating purposes. The water will be conveyed to the city, distant from the springs but one mile, by means of pipes, and will be associated with heaters of various forms placed in the houses and public buildings. It is anticipated that the cost to consumers will be about one-half that of heat derived from coal. The enterprise, unfortunately, cannot be imitated by many other towns, for there are

few which have such natural conveniences close to their walls.

A skating rink having a surface of real ice, which is renewed every day, has recently been installed at Paris with the greatest success. The flooring is covered with a series of pipes having a total length of five thousand metres, but placed in parallel lines almost touching one another. Through these pipes there circulates an unchangeable solution of chloride of calcium, which is cooled previously to any extent required by the evaporation of ammonia. This pipe-flooring is covered with water, which is very quickly brought to the solid condition. It is proposed to keep this skating rink open all the year round.

In a recent Report by the engineer of the Channel Tunnel Company on the search for coal which has been made near Dover, it is stated that the borings now reach a depth of 2228 feet, and that nine workable seams have been found, containing in the aggregate twenty feet in thickness of good bituminous coal, suitable for gas-making or household purposes.

A tricycle which can be worked indifferently on land or water has lately formed the subject of an American patent. The vehicle has the framework of an ordinary tricycle, but hung between its two larger wheels is a twin-boat, between the prows of which the small front wheel revolves. The larger wheels have blades fixed to their spokes, so that they act as paddle-wheels when the rider leaves *terra firma* and takes to the water. The weight of the machine is about seventy pounds, and it will carry two persons on land, or will support three or more in the water. From this latter circumstance we gather that the contrivance might form a valuable means of saving life in boating and bathing localities.

The issue of the new coinage was preceded by a royal proclamation, and the result is said to be a distinct success. The design for the Queen's head was modelled by Mr T. Brock, R.A., and was subjected to the scrutiny of a Committee before it was finally approved. With the exception of the gold coins and the crown-piece, every new coin will have its value clearly indicated—an innovation which will be welcomed by all, and especially by our foreign visitors, to whom a strange coinage is always a puzzle. The double florin, which has been only recently introduced, and which is so easily confounded with the crown-piece, will be discontinued.

A patent was lately obtained for making 'improvements' in lenses for telescopes, cameras, optical lanterns, &c., the idea being that the manufacture could be considerably cheapened by making the lenses hollow and filling them with water or other liquid. To make the hollow lens, the glass would be blown in a sphere in a box or mould of the required shape. The glasses could also be moulded or pressed into shape. It is very doubtful if good lenses can be produced in this manner, for the slightest departure from true curvature will make a lens useless for any purpose, except perhaps railway signalling and such-like rough work. Hollow lenses have often been used for the adornment of chemists' lamps, for they offer the opportunity of introducing a fluid of any desired colour. But for lenses of large size the system, even if it afforded the necessary perfect results, would be inconvenient, if only on



account of the tendency of glass to fly to pieces with slight changes of temperature when held under any kind of strain, as a vessel full of water must be.

### THE WRONG BLACK BAG.

By ANGELO LEWIS, Author of *The Wizard's Tower*, &c.

It was the eve of Good-Friday. Within the modest parlour of No. 13 Primrose Terrace, a little man, wearing a gray felt hat and a red necktie, stood admiring himself in the looking-glass over the mantel-piece. Such a state of things anywhere else would have had no significance whatever. But circumstances proverbially alter cases. At 13 Primrose Terrace it approached the dimensions of a Portent.

Not to keep the reader in suspense, the little man was Benjamin Quelch, clerk in the office of Messrs Cobble & Clink, coal-merchants, and he was about to carry out a desperate resolution. Most men have some secret ambition; Benjamin's was twofold. For years he had yearned to wear a soft felt hat, and to make a trip to Paris; and for years Fate, in the person of Mrs Quelch, had stood in the way and prevented the indulgence of his longing. Quelch being, as we have hinted, exceptionally small of stature, had, in accordance with the mysterious law of opposites, selected the largest lady of his acquaintance as the partner of his joys. He himself was of a meek and retiring disposition. Mrs Quelch, on the other hand, was a woman of stern and decided temperament, with strong views upon most subjects. She administered Benjamin's finances, regulated his diet, and prescribed for him when his health was out of order. Though fond of him in her own way, she ruled him with a rod of iron, and on three points she was inflexible. To make up for his insignificance of stature, she insisted on his wearing the tallest hat that money could procure, to the exclusion of all other headgear. Secondly, on the ground that it looked more 'professional,' she would allow him none but black silk neckties; and lastly, she would not let him smoke. She had further an intense repugnance to all things foreign, holding as an article of faith that no good thing, whether in art, cookery, or morals, was to be found on other than English soil. When Benjamin once, in a rash moment, suggested a trip to Boulogne by way of summer holiday, the suggestion was received in a manner that took away his appetite for a week afterwards.

The prohibition of smoking Quelch did not much mind; for having in his salad days made trial of a cheap cigar, the result somehow satisfied him that tobacco was not in his line, and he ceased to yearn for it accordingly. But the tall hat and the black necktie were constant sources of irritation. He had an idea, based on his having once won a drawing prize at school, that Nature had intended him for an artist, and he secretly lamented the untoward fate which had thrown him away upon coals. Now the few artists Benjamin had chanced to meet affected a soft and slouchy style of headgear, and a considerable amount of freedom, generally with a touch of colour, in the region of the neck.

Such, therefore, in the fitness of things, should have been the hat, and such the neckgear of Benjamin Quelch; and the veto of his wife only made him yearn for them the more intensely.

In later years he had been seized with a longing to see Paris. It chanced that a clerk in the same office, one Peter Flipp, had made one of a personally conducted party on a visit to the gay city. The cost of the trip had been but five guineas; but never, surely, were five guineas so magnificently invested. There was a good deal of romance about Flipp, and it may be that his accounts were not entirely trustworthy; but they so fired the imagination of our friend Benjamin that he had at once begun to hoard up surreptitious sixpences, with the hope that some day he, too, might, by some unforeseen combination of circumstances, be enabled to visit the enchanted city.

And at last that day had come. Mrs Quelch, with her three children and her one domestic, had gone to Lowestoft for an Easter outing; Benjamin and a deaf charwoman, Mrs Widger, being left in charge of the family belongings. Benjamin's Easter holidays were limited to Good-Friday and Easter-Monday; and as it seemed hardly worth while that he should travel so far as Lowestoft for such short periods, Mrs Quelch had thoughtfully arranged that he should spend the former day at the British Museum, and the latter at the Zoological Gardens. Two days after her departure, however, Mr Cobble called Quelch into his private office and told him that, if he liked, he might for once take holiday from the Friday to the Tuesday inclusive, and join his wife at the seaside.

Quelch accepted the boon with an honest intention of employing it as suggested. Indeed, he had even begun a letter to his wife, announcing the pleasing intelligence, and had got as far as 'My dear Penelope,' when a wild and wicked thought struck him: Why should he not spend his unexpected holiday in Paris?

Laying down his pen, he opened his desk and counted his secret hoard. It amounted to five pounds seventeen; twelve shillings more than Flipp's outlay. There was no difficulty in that direction; and nobody would be any the wiser. His wife would imagine that he was in London, while his employers would believe him to be at Lowestoft. There was a brief struggle in his mind, but the tempter prevailed, and with a courage worthy of a better cause, he determined to risk it and go.

And thus it came to pass that, on the evening of our story, Benjamin Quelch, having completed his packing—which merely comprised what he was accustomed to call his 'night-things,' neatly bestowed in a small black hand-bag belonging to Mrs Quelch—stood before the looking-glass and contemplated his guilty splendour—the red necktie and the soft gray felt hat, purchased out of his surplus funds. He had expended a couple of guineas in a second-class return ticket, and another two pounds in 'coupons,' entitling him to bed, breakfast, and dinner for five days at certain specified hotels in Paris. This outlay, with half-a-crown for a pair of gloves, and a bribe of five shillings to secure the silence of Mrs Widger, left him with little more than a pound

in hand, but this small surplus would no doubt amply suffice for his modest needs.

His only regret, as he gazed at himself in the glass, was that he had not had time to grow a moustache, the one thing needed to complete his artistic appearance. But time was fleeting, and he dared not linger over the enticing picture. He stole along the passage and softly opened the street-door. As he did so, a sudden panic came over him, and he felt half inclined to abandon his rash design. But as he wavered, he caught sight of the detested tall hat hanging up in the passage, and he hesitated no longer. He passed out, and closing the door behind him, started at a brisk pace for Victoria Station.

His plans had been laid with much ingenuity, though at a terrible sacrifice of his usual straightforwardness. He had written a couple of letters to Mrs Quelch, to be posted by Mrs Widger on appropriate days, giving imaginary accounts of his visits to the British Museum and Zoological Gardens, with pointed allusions to the behaviour of the elephant and other circumstantial particulars. To ensure the posting of these in proper order, he had marked the dates in pencil on the envelopes in the corner usually occupied by the postage stamp, so that when the latter was affixed the figures would be concealed. He explained the arrangement to Mrs Widger, who promised that his instructions should be faithfully carried out.

After a sharp walk he reached the railway station, and in due course found himself steaming across the Channel to Dieppe. The passage was not especially rough, but to poor Quelch, unaccustomed as he was to the sea, it seemed as if the boat must go to the bottom every moment. To the bodily pains of sea-sickness were added the mental pangs of remorse, and between the two he reached Dieppe more dead than alive; indeed, he would almost have welcomed death as a release from his sufferings.

Even when the boat had arrived at the pier, he still remained in the berth he had occupied all night, and would probably have continued to lie there, had not the steward lifted him by main force to his feet. He seized his black bag with a groan and staggered on deck. Here he felt a little better; but new terrors seized him at the sight of the gold-laced officials and blue-bloused porters who lined each side of the gangway, all talking at the top of their voices, and in tones which seemed, to his unaccustomed ear, to convey a thirst for British blood. No sooner had he landed than he was accosted by a ferocious-looking personage—in truth, a harmless Custom-house officer—who asked him, in French, whether he had anything to declare, and made a movement to take his bag in order to mark it as 'passed.' Quelch jumped to the conclusion that the stranger was a brigand bent on depriving him of his property, and he held on to the bag with such tenacity that the *douanier* naturally inferred there was something specially contraband about it. He proceeded to open it, and produced—among sundry other feminine belongings—a lady's frilled and furbelowed night-dress, from which as he unrolled it, fell a couple of bundles of cigars!

Benjamin's look of astonishment as he saw these unexpected articles produced from his hand-bag was interpreted by the officials as a look of guilt. As a matter of fact, half stupefied

by the agonies of the night, he had forgotten the precise spot where he had left his own bag, and had picked up in its stead one belonging to the wife of a sporting gentleman on his way to some races at Longchamps. Desiring to smuggle a few 'weeds,' and deeming that the presence of such articles would be less likely to be suspected among a lady's belongings, the sporting gentleman had committed them to his companion's keeping. Hand-bags, as a rule, are 'passed' unopened, and such would probably have been the case in the present instance had not Quelch's look of panic excited suspicion. The real owners of the bag had picked up Quelch's, which it precisely resembled, and were close behind him on the gangway. The lady uttered an exclamation of dismay as she saw the contents of her bag spread abroad by the Customs officer, but was promptly silenced by her husband. 'Keep your blessed tongue quiet,' he whispered. 'If a bloomin' idiot chooses to sneak our bag, and then to give himself away to the first man that looks at him, he must stand the racket.' Whereupon the sporting gentleman and lady, first taking a quiet peep into Benjamin's bag to make sure that it contained nothing compromising, passed the examiner with a smile of conscious innocence, and, after an interval for refreshment at the buffet, took their seats in the train for Paris.

Meanwhile poor Quelch was taken before a pompous individual with an extra large moustache and a double allowance of gold lace on his cap, and charged not only with defrauding the revenue, but with forcibly resisting an officer in the execution of his duty. The accusation being in French, Quelch did not understand a word of it, and in his ignorance took it for granted that he was accused of stealing the strange bag and its contents. Visions of imprisonment, penal servitude, nay, even capital punishment, floated before his bewildered brain. Finally, the official with the large moustache made a speech to him in French, setting forth that for his dishonest attempt to smuggle he must pay a fine of a hundred francs. With regard to the assault on the official, as said official was not much hurt, he graciously agreed to throw that in and make no charge for it. When he had fully explained matters to his own satisfaction, he waited to receive the answer of the prisoner; but none was forthcoming, for the best of reasons. It finally dawned on the official that Quelch might not understand French, and he therefore proceeded to address him in what he considered to be his native tongue.

'You smuggle; smuggle seegar. Zen it must zat you pay amende, hundred francs. You me understand? Hundred francs—Pay! Pay! Pay!' At each repetition of the last word he brought down a dirty fist into the palm of the opposite hand, immediately under Quelch's nose. 'Hundred francs—Engleesh money, four pound.'

Quelch caught the last words, and was relieved to find that it was merely a money payment that was demanded of him. But he was little better off, for having but a few shillings in his pocket, to pay four pounds was as much out of his power as if it had been four hundred. He determined to appeal to the mercy of his captors. 'Not got,' he said apologetically, with a vague idea that by

speaking very elementary English he came somehow nearer to French. 'That all,' he continued, producing his little store, and holding it out beseechingly to the official. '*Pas assez*, not enoff,' growled the latter. Quelch tried again in all his pockets, but only succeeded in finding another threepenny piece. The officer shook his head, and after a brief discussion with his fellows, said: '*Comment-vous appelez-vous, Monsieur?* How you call yourself?'

With a vague idea of keeping his disgrace from his friends, Quelch rashly determined to give a false name. If he had had a few minutes to think it over, he would have invented one for the occasion, but his imagination was not accustomed to such sudden calls, and on the question being repeated, he desperately gave the name of his next-door neighbour, Mr Henry Fladgate. 'Henri Flod-gett,' repeated the officer as he wrote it down. '*Et vous demeurez?* You live, where?' And Quelch proceeded to give the address of Mr Fladgate, 11 Primrose Terrace. '*Très bien.* I send teleg-r-r-amme. *Au violon!*' And poor Benjamin was ignominiously marched to the local police station.

Meanwhile, Quelch's arrangements at home were scarcely working as he had intended. The estimable Mrs Widger, partly by reason of her deafness and partly of native stupidity, had only half understood his instructions about the letters. She knew she was to stamp them, and she knew she was to post them; but the dates in the corners might have been Runic inscriptions for any idea they conveyed to her obfuscated intellect. Accordingly, the first time she visited her usual house of call, which was early on the morning of Good-Friday, she proceeded, in her own language, to 'get the dratted things off her mind' by dropping them both into the nearest pillar-box.

On the following day, therefore, Mrs Quelch at Lowestoft was surprised to find on the breakfast table two letters in her Benjamin's handwriting. Her surprise was still greater when, on opening them, she found one to be a graphic account of a visit to the Zoological Gardens on the following Monday. The conclusion was obvious. Either Benjamin had turned prophet, and had somehow got ahead of the almanac, or he was 'carrying on' in some very underhand manner. Mrs Quelch decided for the latter alternative, and determined to get to the bottom of the matter at once. She cut a sandwich, put on her bonnet, and grasping her umbrella in a manner which boded no good to any one who stayed her progress, started by the next train for Liverpool Street.

On reaching home, she extracted from the weeping Widger, who had just been spending the last of Benjamin's five shillings, and was far gone in depression and gin-and-water, that her 'good gentleman' had not been home since Thursday night. This was bad enough; but there was still more conclusive evidence that he was up to no good in the shape of his tall hat, which hung, a silent accuser, on the last peg in the passage.

Having pumped Mrs Widger till there was no more (save tears) to be pumped out of her, Mrs Quelch, still firmly grasping her umbrella, proceeded next door, on the chance that her neigh-

bour, Mrs Fladgate, might be able to give her some information. She found Mrs Fladgate weeping in the parlour with an open telegram before her. Being a woman who did not stand upon ceremony, she read the telegram, which was dated from Dieppe, and ran as follows: 'Monsieur Fladgate here detained for to have smuggle cigars. Fine to pay, one hundred franc. Send money, and he will be release.'

'Oh! the men, the men!' ejaculated Mrs Quelch, as she dropped into an armchair. 'They're all alike. First Benjamin, and now Fladgate! I shouldn't wonder if they had gone off together.'

'You don't mean to say Mr Quelch has gone too?' sobbed Mrs Fladgate.

'He has taken a shameful advantage of my absence. He has not been home since Thursday evening, and his hat is hanging up in the hall.'

'You don't think he has been m-m-murdered?'

'I'm not afraid of *that*,' replied Mrs Quelch. 'It wouldn't be worth anybody's while. But what has he got on his head? that's what I want to know. Of course, if he's with Mr Fladgate in some foreign den of iniquity, that accounts for it.'

'Don't foreigners wear hats?' inquired Mrs Fladgate innocently.

'Not the respectable English sort, I'll be bound,' replied Mrs Quelch. 'Some outlandish rubbish, I daresay. But I thought Mr Fladgate was on his Scotch journey.' (Mr Fladgate, it should be stated, was a traveller in the oil and colour line.)

'So he is. I mean, so he ought to be. In fact, I expected him home to-day. But now he's in p-p-prison; and I may never see him any m-mo-more.' And Mrs Fladgate wept afresh.

'Stuff and nonsense!' retorted Mrs Quelch. 'You've only to send the money they ask for, and they'll be glad enough to get rid of him. But I wouldn't hurry; I'd let him wait a bit—you'll see him soon enough, never fear.'

The prophecy was fulfilled sooner than the prophet expected. Scarcely were the words out of her mouth when a cab was heard to draw up at the door, and a moment later Fladgate himself, a big jovial man, wearing a white hat very much on one side, entered the room, and threw a bundle of rugs on the sofa.

'Home again, old girl, and glad of it!—Mornin', Mrs Quelch,' said the new-comer.

Mrs Fladgate gazed at him doubtfully for a moment, and then flung her arms round his neck, ejaculating, 'Saved, saved!'

'Martha,' said Mrs Quelch reprovingly, 'have you no self-respect? Is *this* the way you deal with so shameful a deception?' Then, turning to the supposed offender: 'So, Mr Fladgate, you have escaped from your foreign prison.'

'Foreign how much? Have you both gone dotty, ladies? I've just escaped from a third-class carriage on the London and North-western. The space is limited, but I never heard it called a foreign prison.'

'It is useless to endeavour to deceive us,' said Mrs Quelch sternly. 'Look at that telegram, Mr Fladgate, and deny it if you can. You have been gadding about in some vile foreign place with my misguided husband.'

'Oh, Quelch is in it too, is he? Then it

must be a bad case. But let's see what we have been up to, for, 'pon my word, I'm quite in the dark at present.'

He held out his hand for the telegram, and read it carefully. 'Somebody's been having a lark with you, old lady,' he said to his wife. 'You know well enough where I've been; my regular northern journey, and nowhere else.'

'I don't believe a word of it,' said Mrs Quelch; 'you men are all alike; deceivers every one of you.'

'Much obliged for your good opinion, Mrs Quelch. I had no idea Quelch was such a bad lot. But so far as I am concerned, the thing's easily tested. Here is the bill for my bed last night at Carlisle. Now, if I was in Carlisle, and larking about at Dieppe at the same time, perhaps you'll kindly explain how I managed it.'

Mrs Quelch was staggered, but not convinced. 'But if—if you were at Carlisle, where is Benjamin, and what does this telegram mean?'

'Not being a wizard, I really can't say. But concerning Quelch, we shall find him, never fear. When did he disappear?'

Mrs Quelch told her story, not forgetting the mysterious letter.

'I think I see daylight,' said Fladgate. 'The party who has got into that mess is Quelch, and being frightened out of his wits, he has given my name instead of his own. That's about the size of it!'

'But Benjamin doesn't smoke. And how should he come to be at Dieppe?'

'Went for a holiday, I suppose. As for smoking, I shouldn't have thought he was up to it; but with that sat-upon sort of man—begging your pardon, Mrs Quelch—you never know where he may break out. Worms will turn, you know, and sometimes they take a wrong turning.'

'But Benjamin would never dare!'

'That's just it. He daren't do anything when you've got your eye on him. When you haven't, perhaps he may, and perhaps he mayn't. The fact is, you hold up his head too tight, and if he jibs now and then, you can't wonder at it.'

'You have a very coarse way of putting things, Mr Fladgate. Mr Quelch is not a horse, that I am aware of.'

'We won't quarrel about the animal, my dear madam, but you may depend upon it my solution's right. A hardened villain, like myself, say, would never have got into such a scrape; but Quelch don't know enough of the world to keep himself out of mischief. They've got him in quod, that's clear, and the best thing you can do is to send the coin and get him out again.'

'Send money to those swindling Frenchmen! Never! If Benjamin is in prison, I will fetch him out myself.'

'You would never risk that dreadful sea-passage,' exclaimed Mrs Fladgate. 'And how will you manage the language? You don't understand French.'

'Oh! I shall do very well,' said the heroic woman. 'They won't talk French to me!'

That same night, a female passenger crossed by the boat from Newhaven to Dieppe. The passage was rough, and the passenger was very seasick, but she still sat grimly upright, never for

one moment relaxing her grasp on the handle of her silk umbrella. What she went through on landing, how she finally obtained her husband's release, and what explanations passed between the re-united pair, must be left to the reader's imagination, for Mrs Quelch never told the story. Twenty-four hours later, a four-wheeled cab drew up at the Quelches' door, and from it descended, first a stately female, and then a woe-begone little man in a soft felt hat and a red necktie, both sorely crushed and soiled, with a black bag in his hand. 'Is there a fire in the kitchen?' asked Mrs Quelch the moment she set foot in the house. Being assured that there was, she proceeded down the kitchen stairs, Quelch meekly following her. 'Now,' she said, pointing to the black bag. 'Those—Things!' Benjamin opened the bag, and tremblingly took out the frilled night-dress and the cigars. His wife pointed to the fire, and he meekly laid them on it. 'Now that necktie.' The necktie followed the cigars. 'And that thing;' and the hat crowned the funeral pile.

The smell was peculiar, and to the ordinary nose disagreeable, but to Mrs Quelch it was as the odour of burnt incense. She watched the heap as it smouldered away, and finally dispersed the embers by a vigorous application of the poker.

'Now, Benjamin,' she said to her trembling spouse, 'I forgive you. But if ever again!'

The warning was left unspoken, but it was not needed. Benjamin's one experience has more than satisfied his yearning for soft raiment and foreign travel, and his hats are taller than ever.

#### UNTIL THE EVENING.

Tired with the daily toil for daily bread,

The spirit slaving for the body's needs,

The brain and nerve are dulled, and the heart bleeds  
And breaks with grief of brooding thought unsaid:

Were we but born to labour and be fed?

To spend our souls in lowly, trivial deeds,

Mere sordid coin the crown of what succeeds?

Ah! yet press on, though with a fainting tread—

Till Evening ends our work and stills our cries:

Then we may find our lowness is our height,

Our crown, the tasks we wrought with sobbing  
breath;

As common things a sunset glorifies,

This life, at last, may robe itself in light

And stand transfigured at the touch of death.

A. ST J. ADcock.

#### \* \* TO CONTRIBUTORS.

1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.

2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.

3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.

4th. Offerings of Verse should invariably be accompanied by a stamped and directed envelope.

If the above rules are complied with, the Editor will do his best to ensure the safe return of ineligible papers.

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